

TPO Technical Committee Minutes
February 14, 2012
9:00 a.m.
Main Assembly Room
City/County Building
Knoxville, Tennessee

The Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Technical Committee met on February 14, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. in the Main Assembly Room of the City County Building in Knoxville. Chair, Andrew Sonner presided and called the meeting to order.

*Brian Boone	City of Maryville
*Don Brown	East Tennessee Development District (ETDD) <i>for Terry Bobrowski</i>
*Mark Donaldson	Knoxville-Knox County MPC
*John Lamb	Blount County
*Angie Midgett	Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT)
*Barbara Monty	Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC)
*Ted Newsom	Knoxville Commuter Pool
*Cindy Pionke	Knox County <i>for Dwight Van de Vate</i>
*Melissa Roberson	Knoxville Area Transit (KAT)
*Blake Sartin	Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority (MKAA)
*Darryl Smith	Town of Farragut
*Andrew Sonner	City of Alcoa
*Leslie Johnson	Lenoir City
*Perrin Anderson	Sevier County <i>for Greg Patterson</i>
*Rich DesGroseilliers	Lakeway Area Metropolitan TPO
*Jim Hagerman	City of Knoxville
John Hunter	City of Knoxville
Anne Wallace	City of Knoxville
Vince Bernardin, Jr.	Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates, Inc.
Corbin Davis	Federal Highway Administration-TN
Elizabeth Martin	Federal Transit Administration-Region 4
Jennifer Hibbert	Federal Transit Administration-Region 4
Britta Stein	Federal Highway Administration-TN
Charlie O'Neill	Federal Highway Administration-TN
Karen Estes	Knox County CAC Transit
Steve Fritts	BWSC
Chris Jenkins	Town of Farragut
Ruth Hawk	Town of Farragut
Rebekah Jane Montgomery	Knox County
Steve King	City of Knoxville
Jeff Welch	Director, Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)
Nathan Benditz	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Bryan Berry	Metropolitan Planning Commission Staff
Doug Burton	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Mike Conger	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Terry Gilhula	Metropolitan Planning Commission Staff
Alan Huff	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Kelley Segars	Transportation Planning Organization Staff

Amy Brooks

Transportation Planning Organization Staff

***voting members**

Determination of Quorum

1. Approval of December 13, 2011 minutes

- Action
- Possible Action
- Discussion
- Information

Presenter: Andrew Sonner, Chair

Item Summary: Approval of December 13, 2011 TPO Technical Committee minutes. **Attachment #1.**

Discussion: Jeff Welch (TPO) introduced and welcomed Jim Hagerman, the Director of Engineering for the City of Knoxville and the new Administrative Assistant for TPO, Dori Caron. Each member of the Committee introduced themselves. Andrew Sonner asked for approval of the minutes.

Action: A motion was made by Melissa Roberson (KAT) and seconded by John Lamb (Blount County) approve the December 13, 2011 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Recommend Approval of Amendment to the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Action
- Possible Action
- Discussion
- Information

Presenter: TPO Staff

Item Summary: The following Amendment to the TIP was requested by our state or local governments and staff recommends approval.

- a. Amend TIP Project 2011-215 (Smart Trips Program). Amend the project by increasing FY2013 funding (CMAQ) from \$60,600 total (\$50,600 federal and \$10,000 local) by adding \$245,200 in additional CMAQ funds and removing the \$10,000 local match to \$295,800 total. Add FY2014 funding (CMAQ) to the project in the amount of \$162,000 total. Note - funds in the amount of \$152,000 total are available in FY2015. The local match, currently provided by Knox County will be discontinued after FY2012 due to county budget cuts but Smart Trips will seek private funds as the local match through relationships with participating employers. **Attachment #2a**

Discussion: Bryan Berry (TPO) reviewed the requested Amendment per Attachment #2a. In December of 2011 TDOT approved a proposal by the Knoxville TPO to expand the activities under Smart Trips Program using CMAQ funding. Regarding the FY2015, the current TIP does not extend out that far and when Bryan spoke with TDOT they suggested noting it on the project’s TIP page for future reference at this point.

There were no questions or comments.

Jeff Welch (TPO) added the following clarification: The \$10,000 noted as loss of local match was through Knox County’s Environmental Air Quality Board however their EPA funding is being decreased. There is no match required therefore no federal funds are jeopardized. This additional CMAQ funds will allow for the TPO to reach out to major employers in the region.

Action: A motion was made by Leslie Johnson (Lenoir City) and seconded by Cindy Pionke (Knox County) to accept the Amendment. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Election of Officers

Action Possible Action Discussion Information

Presenter: Andrew Sonner, Chair

Item Summary: The Bylaws of the Technical Committee require an annual election of officers: Chair and Vice Chair. The terms of office are for one year and an officer is eligible to serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. The bylaws require an election to be held at the first meeting of the year.

Background: Chair Andrew Sonner and Vice Chair Leslie Johnson have served a one-year term.
Attachment #3.

Discussion: Andrew Sonner asked if there were any nominations.

Action: A motion was made by John Lamb (Blount County) and seconded by Daryl Smith (Town of Farragut) to nominate Andrew Sonner for another one year term as Chair, and Leslie Johnson for another one year term as Vice-Chair. It was further noted that nominations be closed and that the Committee would elect by acclamation. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Long Range Mobility Plan Update- Timeline

Action Possible Action Discussion Information

Presenter: TPO Staff

Item Summary: Staff will review the proposed timeline for completion of the Long Range Mobility Plan update and other major projects that will occur over the next 12 to 18 months. **Attachment #4 – Timeline**

Discussion: Alan Huff (TPO) reviewed the Timeline. One purpose of the timeline is to put into perspective all of the different studies and planning processes the TPO has going on including PlanET, the TPO Outreach Plan, Air Quality Conformity, Travel Demand Model update, and the Regional Transit Corridor Study. The main emphasis of the timeline is on the [Long Range] Regional Mobility Plan (RMP) Update and all of its required components.

Jeff Welch (TPO) reiterated that there were major activities going on in PlanET and further noted the other components listed within the RMP represent the bulk of TPO’s efforts. TPO is ramping up and has consultants updating the Travel Demand Model. TPO will also be using a new Air Quality Model called MOVES for which TPO staff are currently receiving extensive training. The Regional Transit Study is underway and part of that study is to build a mode-choice model component for transit analysis that can be used to link to our Travel Demand Model, allowing TPO staff to do an assessment of transit demand as well as overall travel demand. The timeline is very aggressive so that the Plan can meet federal deadlines in 2013. TPO is updating their Outreach Plan and they will be doing as much outreach as possible given the level of activity associated with PlanET. The next 12-18 months will be very busy. The [Long Range] Regional Mobility Plan will be on the agenda as a regular item to update the Technical Committee for the next 12-14 months. Alan Huff (TPO) noted a “T” on the Timeline represents items that TPO staff will be bringing to the Technical Committee for discussion and possible action.

Corbin Davis (FHWA) asked for clarification on the “thick red bars” on the timeline diagram. Alan Huff (TPO) noted that they represented 3 major deadlines in the RMP process. The first bar indicates initial draft completion where the plan will undergo an initial review by the public and technical staff. A second bar, noting the final draft with any changes, also indicates the beginning of the federally

required 45-day comment period [45-day was stated, however, 30-day is correct], which also begins the formal process for approval. The final bar is the very important deadline, which shows the Mobility Plan is to be updated by 6/01/2013. The current Mobility Plan expires at that time as it had been approved 4 years ago. All activities need to fit into these 3 major time points in order to keep the Plan on schedule.

Corbin Davis (FHWA) asked if June 1st of 2013 is when conformity expires. Jeff Welch (TPO) noted that was correct. Jeff Welch noted the intent is to have the Executive Board adopt the Plan by April of 2013 and this will allow time for review by the Interagency Consultation Group (IAC) and then getting the final approval by FHWA by 6/01/2013.

John Lamb (Blount County) asked about TPO Executive Board involvement in review of the Plan during the process. Jeff Welch (TPO) stated Executive Board activity would be added to the Timeline including when the TPO Technical Committee will be bringing items forward to the Executive Board to update them. John Lamb (Blount County) indicated he wanted to ensure this is not just a Technical Committee activity and that the Executive Board is involved all they way. John Lamb (Blount County) inquired if PlanET's Transportation Working Group activities can be speeded up to get an intermediate product to be used in this process. Jeff Welch (TPO) noted one of the difficulties of the timeline was that the Mobility Plan and the PlanET processes had different completion times. However, Jeff stated that TPO would try to use the working group as a tool for input. John Lamb (Blount County) further noted he would like that everything given to the Technical Committee to be given to the PlanET transportation working group. Jeff Welch (TPO) indicated that TPO would definitely share it with them.

Alan Huff (TPO) stated that people can submit any questions or comments to him.

5. Socioeconomic Data Projections

Action Possible Action Discussion Information

Presenter: TPO Staff and Consultant.

Item Summary: A presentation on the draft Socio-economic projections for the Mobility Plan update will be provided by TPO staff and consultants.

Discussion: Mike Conger (TPO) stated that the consulting firm, Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates, Inc. have been involved for several years in preparing updates to the TPO's Travel Demand Forecasting Model and they are currently working on another update to the Model that will be prepared for use and development of the next Long Range Mobility Plan. One of the key first steps in the Timeline discussed in the previous item is to develop future socio economic and population projections for the region for the next 20 years. In the past we have relied on a national data set prepared by Woods and Poole Economics for projection data. We have a very large area included in our Travel Demand Model. Part of this update is expanding it further to take in all of the Lakeway Area Metropolitan TPO's area so we are adding Hamblen County into the model bringing it up to a total of ten counties. We have decided to have our consultant prepare these projections based on local data. We will be asking for the Technical Committee's endorsement of these projections for county levels of growth at a future meeting.

There is an effort within PlanET to also develop employment and population projections. TPO staff will be reconciling those projections with the ones prepared by our consultants. The goal is to be working with one set of numbers for both PlanET and the Mobility Plan.

Mike Conger (TPO) introduced consultant Vince Bernardin Jr., Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates, Inc. Mr. Bernardin discussed the advantages and disadvantages of Woods & Poole Economics being derived from a more standardized process as they are developed on a national level but they do have an integrated approach to forecasting so that their economic and population forecasts are linked. Locally, the University of Tennessee's Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) has population forecasts but they do not report economic forecasts.

Mr. Bernardin noted his firm had been tasked with producing both population and employment and labor force projections for the 10-county area that the TPO model covers. He noted the new Model takes in the Lakeway area as well as a number of other areas. He reviewed the results of their forecasts, focusing on the population projections, which will also take in labor force and employment data.

As with most demographic forecasting procedures we look at change in population and break that out into three types of change: births, deaths, and net migration. Their approach is to use the Cohort Survival, Labor Force Linkage Method, where the net migration is driven by the demand for labor. He reviewed their projections.

Jeff Welch (TPO) asked Mr. Bernardin if anyone had questions or would like further clarification regarding their methodologies, could they contact him directly and/or would he participate in a conference call with Mike Conger (TPO). Mr. Bernardin stated he would be happy to accommodate anyone.

John Lamb (Blount County) asked if the TPO had access to CBER's assumptions for this effort as he has been unable to obtain them. Mr. Bernardin indicated they were also unable to obtain that information. John Lamb (Blount County) noted CBER's previous sets of projections were too high based on the subsequent census. A discussion ensued about longevity trends. John Lamb (Blount County) asked if this projection model could highlight the migration of retirees and the effects on the projections. Mr. Bernardin stated they could make that information more explicit.

Barbara Monty (CAC) Director of the Knoxville Knox County Office of Aging commented on recent statistics she came across that noted 50 percent of babies born today will live to be 100, and she did not feel we have hit our peak in the aging process. She has also recognized something in the aging population which is new over the last several years regarding the level of financial insecurity that none of us have seen in our lifetime. She feels that that this will cause a long term impact as baby boomers work longer.

Mike Conger (TPO) stated that these numbers, once agreed upon, will be used as key inputs to the Travel Demand Forecasting Model so that they can forecast traffic going out into the future.

6. City of Alcoa Greenway / Road Crossing Presentation

Action Possible Action Discussion Information

Presenter: Andrew Sonner, City of Alcoa Chief Engineer

Item Summary: The City of Alcoa has used an innovative crossing treatment at its new greenway crossing at Louisville Road.

Discussion: Andrew Sonner (City of Alcoa) gave a project overview of their greenway trail system and the most recent improvement. The project was at Culton Creek Trail and was funded through a TDOT Enhancement grant. Alcoa constructed 1.5 miles of walking trails/sidewalk, two bridges, one grade separated rail crossing, one major road crossing (Louisville Road), and four minor road

crossings. There were also approximately 1,000 ft. of wetlands that were crossed including the construction of a 155-foot boardwalk. The 2 bridges were about 40 feet in span. The new improvement is connecting five subdivisions and 1,500 households. This is an area wide trail system that includes Maryville and Alcoa. Alcoa itself has approximately 8 miles of trails.

The Louisville Road crossing traffic counts are about 9,480 Average Daily Traffic (ADT). Public meeting comments and perceptions were that people were concerned about persons crossing Louisville Road as it can be very busy in peak hours and though the long straightaway is good for sight distance, motorists tend to speed, therefore the refuge island was very important to the overall safety of the project. They looked at sight distance for both trail users and vehicle users, and they wanted a smaller economical footprint as they had a limited budget.

Alcoa wanted to make this crossing as visible as possible. The crossing has flash-lighting that automatically engages through the use of a microwave emitter that picks up an approaching pedestrian who is going to cross. If needed, there is also a back up push button for pedestrians. The programmable flash is for 35 seconds. It flashes only when there is a crossing so motorists do not become used to seeing the warning flashes. It is wireless and completely solar powered and can handle up to eight poles. This system also counts each time the beam is broken and can be downloaded to retrieve that information as well. The system recharges after two hours of direct sunlight with a battery life of one month without any recharging.

The crossing system was bid at \$12,000 (it was a low bid). There is a provision in the bid that if anyone locally wants to use this bid the company would honor it. If anyone is interested Andrew would be glad to provide the bid to them. It was further noted that the counter had not yet been set up on this crossing and that the speed limit there was 45 mph.

John Lamb (Blount County) noted that coming from Louisville at night, particularly when it is raining the reflectors on the poles (delineators) don't work well and asked if they could they be upgraded. Andrew Sonner (City of Alcoa) noted that was a good idea and also noted that they have advance warning signs per the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Brian Boone (City of Maryville) asked about the battery life. Andrews stated battery life is at least five years.

7. TPO Outreach Plan

Action Possible Action Discussion Information

Presenter: TPO Staff, Alan Huff

Item Summary: The Outreach Plan is a core TPO document, required by Federal Regulations, which requires TPO staff to review and update the Plan every four years. The Draft must be released for a 45-day public review period prior to adoption. **Attachment #5 - Summary of Major Changes**

Discussion: Alan Huff (TPO) reviewed the major changes in proposed Plan. This encompassed 5 areas: (1) repackaging and adding more information about the TPO for the public, including a new name to reflect the more active outreach efforts, (2) a focus on more user-friendly publications, (3) a philosophy that the Plan establishes a reasonable minimum but promotes greater outreach and the development of best practices, (4) a better Plan evaluation processes, and (5) the addition of relevant Federal guidance.

Alan noted that TPO was looking for better feedback on what did and did not work with an outreach event. Alan stated the official public comment period would begin on March 9th and conclude in time for the April 25th TPO Executive Board meeting.

There were no questions.

8. TPO Certification Review

Action Possible Action Discussion Information

Presenter: FHWA Staff

Item Summary: Every four years the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration conducts a certification review of the Knoxville TPO planning process. The last review was conducted in the spring of 2008. A public meeting will be held on Monday, February 13, 2012 at the KAT Knoxville Station to gather any public input on the planning process for the TPO.

Attachment #6 - Certification Agenda

Discussion: Jeff Welch (TPO) introduced Corbin Davis, Planning and Air Quality Specialist from the Federal Highway Administration who then introduced his counterpart in the Federal Transit Administration, Elizabeth Martin. He stated they were here to inform the Technical Committee about their Federal Planning Certification Review. They are required by federal law and regulation to jointly certify every four years that the Knoxville Regional TPO meets all requirements of federal law including highways, transit and air quality. The last review was completed in April 2008 and so it is now time to go through the process again. The process has three components, the first of which is a desk review conducted by the FTA and FHWA looking at the planning process and planning products produced by the Knoxville Regional TPO. The second part is an onsite review which kicked off last night with a Public Meeting at the KAT Knoxville Station. The meeting was valuable and offered quality feedback from some concerned parties. The onsite review continues this afternoon (2/14/2012) with the TPO staff and they will be reviewing the planning process and documents in more detail. The third part is a closeout meeting tomorrow to go over some preliminary results and discuss any areas where we will be looking at in more detail. Finally, this April, FHWA and FTA will come back with a final report hopefully certifying that the Knoxville Regional TPO meets all applicable requirements of federal law and that the metropolitan planning process is comprehensive, continuing, and cooperative. He asked for feedback from the TPO Technical Committee about the TPO's planning process. Leslie Johnson (Lenoir City) offered compliments on a job well done to Jeff Welch (TPO) and his staff on the work they do not only for Lenoir City, a small municipality, but for the group as a whole, and especially on keeping everyone informed.

Corbin Davis (FHWA-TN) invited continued questions and/or feedback as participants in the process.

Jeff Welch (TPO) discussed input from an attendee at last night's public meeting with regards to the greenways and the burdensome costs placed on communities if they want to use federal funds to build smaller projects. This issue has come up several times at the TPO Technical Committee meetings by various members.

Andrew Sonner (City of Alcoa) noted that they have done a few miles of greenways and other enhancement projects and the Construction Engineer Inspector usually runs 10 to 15 percent of the project. It becomes a burden when there is a minimal amount of money and it is not really a highway, it is a greenway trail. The biggest load on a trail is when you are laying asphalt (if you are doing asphalt). The environmental phase for a greenway trail can last for 6-9 months.

Brian Boone (City of Maryville) further commented sidewalks and greenway trails are not as technically complicated as roadways so they can be done in house with competent technical personnel and that would allow for the inspection of that construction to also be done in house. When you have grant requirements for outside consultant to handle the duties of a CEI you lose dollars that can be translated into asphalt and concrete and actual infrastructure. These dollars are lost in the required

administration and documentation. The ability to do a lot of work locally can take away from the attractiveness of a grant program, especially in the \$50,000-\$80,000 or \$100,000 range when you consider the money needed to be spent to meet all the requirements. When looking at grants in the million dollar range, it is less of a factor.

Cindy Pionke (Knox County), noted that with the Safe Route To School program, Knox County just found out that they did not get a grant they had applied for last year. In the process of putting together that grant she had worked with capital project inspectors who are familiar with how they cost out their county projects. They felt that it could be done cheaper in house. They are now reassessing what the cost will be to do the project in-house instead of reapplying for the federal grant.

There were no public comments about the TPO process or any other Agenda item.

9. Other Business

- TDOT Update

Angie Midgett (TDOT) announced TDOT's hire of a new Director in the Long Range Planning Division. Ms. Tanisha Hall started 2 weeks ago. Ms. Hall was formally with the Greater National Regional Council in Nashville. There is a new round of Tiger Discretionary Grants available. There is \$500 million available in this grant cycle. The pre-applications are due February 20th and the final applications are due March 19th. If you have any interest please contact Jeff Welch (TPO).

Jeff Welch (TPO) noted that there are 5 working groups being developed for PlanET. If anyone is interested in participating in these groups they continue to recruit for people to serve on them. They will meet approximately 5 times over the next 12-18 months. They will serve as a ground truthing for what we are hearing out on the streets and to evaluate existing conditions and projections as well as needs for those focus areas. That information will feed into the broader planning process.

Leslie Johnson (Lenoir City) asked that an email be sent to update everyone as to what the working groups are and who is currently serving on them. Jeff Welch (TPO) noted the first round of meetings for the working groups are later this month.

- TPO Executive Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 22, at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City County Building.
- TPO Technical Committee Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 13, at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City County Building.

10. Public comment

Members of the public may address the Technical Committee with a five-minute time limitation for each person.

11. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned by Andrew Sonner (City of Alcoa)